



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
Research Triangle Park, 27711

National Center for  
Environmental Assessment

October 25, 2016

Michael P. Walls  
Vice-President  
Regulatory & Technical Affairs  
American Chemistry Council (ACC)

Mr. Walls:

I am responding to your letter of September 19, 2016 to Dr. Thomas Burke and Dr. Robert Kavlock regarding the IRIS Program's lack of responsiveness to public comments. The US Environmental Protection Agency and the IRIS program are committed to transparency and stakeholder engagement. We seek written comments from the public, including stakeholders (e.g., ACC, NRDC), when we release a draft assessment (step 4 in the enhanced IRIS process). We then evaluate the comments received during the public comment period and revise the assessment accordingly. The revised assessment undergoes an external peer review, currently conducted by a subcommittee of EPA's Science Advisory Board. The SAB panel not only reviews the revised assessment, they receive all of the public comments along with a disposition of comments report that describes how the comments were treated. Since the SAB process is guided by the Federal Advisory Committee Act, a public process, all of the materials noted above are publically available and remain so as a history tab on the IRIS web site, specific to each chemical. The final assessment includes a disposition of peer review comments included as an appendix.

Specific to the recently posted final IRIS assessment on the isomers of trimethylbenzene, the resolution to public comments can be found using this link:  
[https://ofmpub.epa.gov/eims/eimscomm.getfile?p\\_download\\_id=515351](https://ofmpub.epa.gov/eims/eimscomm.getfile?p_download_id=515351). Note that in some instances the time between our response to public comments and the posting of the final assessment can be months to years, depending on circumstances. In the future, we will be sure to clearly link our response to public comments with the final posting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Slimak", is written over the typed name.

Michael Slimak, Ph.D.  
Acting Director, National Center for Environmental Assessment  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
109 T.W. Alexander Drive  
Research Triangle Park, NC 27711

cc: Thomas Burke  
Robert Kavlock